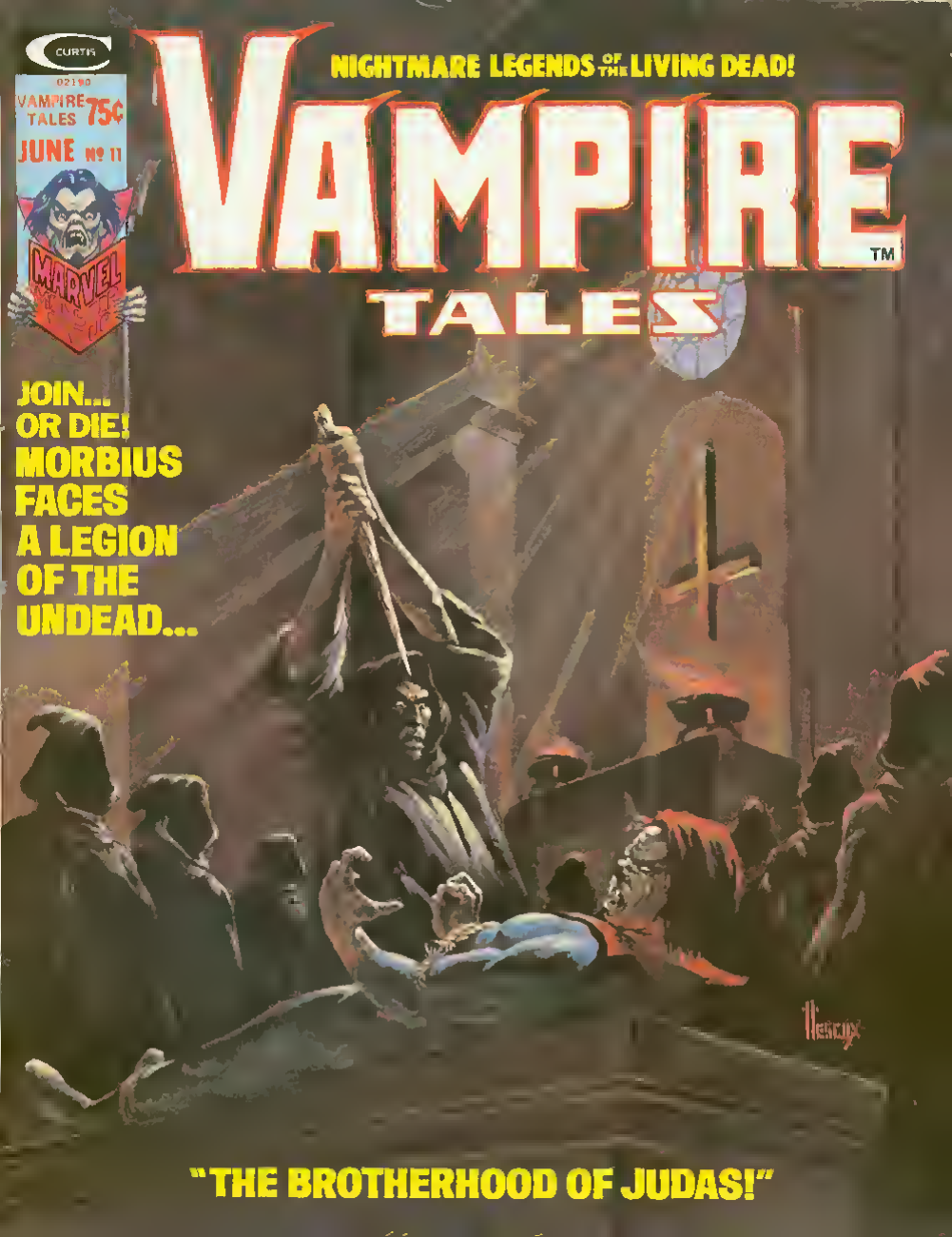
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VAMPIRE TALES 75¢
JUNE No 11
MARVEL
NIGHTMARE LEGENDS OF THE LIVING DEAD!
VAMPIRE
TALES
JOIN... OR DIE!
MORBIUS FACES A LEGION OF THE UNDEAD...
"THE BROTHERHOOD OF JUDAS!"

PETE
LARUCO

STAN LEE presents

VAMPIRE TALES

#11 / June 1975

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"DEATH KISS!"

by Doug Moench & Sonny Trinidad

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"HOBO'S LULLABY!"

by John Warner & Yong Montano

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Dear Marv & co.

VAMPIRE TALES #9 was a good issue marred only by the unavoidable absence of one Michael Morbius. I'm patiently waiting in my tomb for Sonny Trinidad's rendition of the scientific vampire's exploits (along with Steve Gan—I consider him to be a major find for Marvel. The credits for the cover, as listed on the contents page, read "TAD," although the cover itself was signed "Martin Poh." Well whoever's responsible, take a bow. It was just beautiful! (I could have done without that bloody hand reaching up from the bottom, but that's a minor complaint.)

The Blade series is getting off to an excellent start in this, its second installment. "Bloodmoon" by Marv Chris Claremont...and Tony DeZuniga presents variations on traditional vampirism undreamed of elsewhere. Marguerite, Lord Vierken, and the mysterious master are intriguing figures and I look forward to their continued involvement with Blade. I was wondering how much of the "Legion's" activities are known to the Lord of Vampires, Dracula? Something as monumental as the supposed breakthrough they were speaking of probably couldn't be kept too long from the well-like ears of Vlad Tepes.

"Blood Lunge" by the ever creative Doug Moench and Russ Heath—whose work I'm not too familiar with—was a very clever little tale in the tradition of Mr. Moench's previous "A Vampire's Home" is his "Castle" from VAMPIRE TALES #4. Russ Heath did a do cool job on the art, and I was especially taken with that last panel where the scarecrow's straw-filled head is starring at the impaled vampire.

I knew it was inevitable that Marvel's answer to Arthur C. Clarke—Gerry Conway, along with wife Carla—would come up with a futuristic vampire story. The concept was interesting although that explanation given about tapping the wasting energies of the past was a bit vague. Still, this was a decidedly different excursion into vampire lore.

As Larry Lerber wrote in the last panel of "Blood Stalker," "you win some, and you lose some." Everything can't be a gem, so I vote this foray into foolishness the "rapist" award for this issue.

And now I come to the masterpiece. Doug Moench's incredible command of the English language in perfect counterpoint to Tony DeZuniga's mastery of the graphic arts presented us with "Shards of a Crystal Rainbow" alone worth the price of the magazine. Not only is this a superb piece of art in its own right, the "message"—(it may be so crude) was so inextricably bound to the narrative progression that story and moral are one. You can't read this tale for "entertainment" and skip the statement made at the end. Doug, you have achieved here what so many others have tried in comics as well as other mediums to do most often unsuccessfully. You have made a strong, powerful point without sacrificing the reader's intense involvement via patronizing speeches or stereotyped situations. You and Tony have brought us to the nearly untrodden pinnacle, where art and social commentary are inseparable and interchangeable. The protagonist's experience is the reader's experience as we follow him through the most sublime of fantasy worlds only to come sickeningly back to a reality tested reality we were unaware served as the starting point.

There's little I can say about DeZuniga's art that a perusal of "Shards of a Crystal Rainbow" won't convey more effectively. Having seen a good deal of Tony's art recently in Marvel's black and white line, I have come to the conclusion that he is the finest artist now working in the b&w area.

As you people continue to put out such superlative magazines and learn the ropes of this new medium, it becomes increasingly difficult to write critiques that are more than merely praise filled missives.

Ralph Macchio
188 Wilson Drive
Cresskill, NJ 07626

Aw shucks, Ralph, thanks. You know how we hate to accept unabashed compliments, which is why we're always sure to make at least a dozen mistakes each issue, just so we can remain humble. You might not believe us, but then again, you haven't read the following letter yet, have you?

Dear People,

"Blood Lunge" was a nice little tale with an amusing ending. By the way, who pulled that goof with the page order? Page 2 was where page 4 should have been. VERY confusing on first reading.

"Blood Stalker" would have been great. I say would have been, because someone (who shall remain nameless) pulled the biggest blooper in the history of your mag! The reader is told that Lily became a vampire because she WASN'T killed, with the implication that the people who WERE killed by Lily and her partner didn't come back. This is completely opposite to what you have previously established as the (er) unnatural order of things.

Leslie Bee Roza
3331 F Street
Eureka, CA 95501

V'know somethin', Leslie—you're right! On both counts. Usually, in our color comics when we're caught with such blatantly bald faced mistakes we buy our way out of it with a No Prize. But since we're not in the habit of handing out those magnificent nothings here in the black-and-white mags, we'll just have to own up to our shortcomings and leave it at that.

We're sorry people. Really we are. Okay?

Viva Doug Moench!

His excellent allegory "Shards of a Crystal Rainbow" is the most hardhitting anti drug story I have ever read. Also Tony DeZuniga's art beautifully conveyed the mood of Mr. Moench's story. And you know it's all the truth. All drug addiction is a form of vampirism and false pleasure. So if anyone out there Moench's story first.

Eric Braddock
Bettendorf, IO

Marvel—

Shards of a Crystal Rainbow" by writer Doug Moench and artist Tony DeZuniga is a masterpiece!

M. Colman
44 Wallace Street
Red Bank, NJ 07701

This rather concise critique aptly sums up the generally favorable response to the widely-acclaimed tour-de force, "Shards of a Crystal Rainbow," although—to be sure—all was not blood and roses and there were other responses such as that of Ken Peters, who is answered directly by Doug Moench himself in this issue's "Readers' Forum"—

Dear Marv

As a black-and-white magazine, VAMPIRE TALES is outside the jurisdiction of the Comics Code Authority, and therefore doesn't need to comply with any of their rules. Because of this, you have the freedom you don't have in your color comics, but with this freedom must come responsibility, something I find noticeably lacking in the act of publishing Doug Moench's "Shards of a Crystal Rainbow" in VAMPIRE TALES #9.

The Comics Code prohibits the display of the effects of drugs and for a very good reason. Readers may find these effects desirable. And this is exactly what has been done in "Shards," although I'm sure unintentionally. The message Doug tried to convey in this story is the emptiness and uselessness of heroin. The intention is a noble one, the message important. But the graphic depiction of a man's drug-induced dreams is a dangerous and possibly damaging endeavour. Vampirism and a beautiful girl are this man's fantasy world, but they are also the fantasies of your readers, the elements that sell your magazine. One look at your cover proves this: a painting of a beautiful girl, her mouth dripping with blood.

My point is, the drug-induced effects depicted in "Shards" are desirable to your readers; they would love to have as vivid and realistic an experience as this. If they didn't enjoy this type of fantasy, they wouldn't be reading the magazine in the first place.

"Shards of a Crystal Rainbow" I say although written with the best intentions in mind, was an irresponsible use of the comics medium—something I hope won't happen again.

Ken Petera
362 Yale Station
New Haven, CT 06520

Doug Moench replies:

Remaining ignorant to the consequences of a stupid act is far more dangerous than cognizance could ever be, which brings me to Point One: Unintentionally Evil and Dangerous Subjects remain evil and dangerous by remaining unmentioned. Keeping things in the dark casts a pall of darkness over them.

So I wrote "Shards of the Crystal Rainbow" with as Ken Peters states the best intentions in mind. Drugs like they promulgate false fantasies, warp perceptions, make you see white rabbits and cheshire cats as you stumblingly cross a super highway in the face of 90 mph steel juggernauts called Sporty or Elegant.

Point Two: The theme of "Crystal Rainbow" centers on the fact that the pernicious effect of drugs lies in their illusory abilities. The sordid, seamy, sleazy, ugly and often dangerous environment of the drug user is transformed through the rose colored lenses of narcotic substances into an appealing fantasyland. And conversely.

And finally, Point Three: While I feel Tony DeZuniga did a magnificent job in translating my script into an illustrated story, perhaps—just perhaps—he over-romanticized certain aspects of the drug experience. But again, drugs MAKE things look romantic (albeit in variegated ways). Therein lies the danger, and—I had hoped, while writing "Rainbow"—the education

READERS' POLL

Here we are again, with a smile on our faces, a song in our heart, and the order of readers' preference for the stories in VAMPIRE TALES #9 on our letters page. Need we say more?

1) "SHARDS OF A CRYSTAL RAINBOW!" by DOUG MOENCH & TONY DeZUNIGA, landsliding into first place on a crest of popular acclaim.
2) "BLEEDING TIME!" written by GERRY B. CONWAY, with art by VIRGILIO REDONDO, ALFREDO ALCALA & TONY DeZUNIGA.
3) "BLOODMOON!" by MARV WOLFMAN, CHRIS CLAREMONT & TONY DeZUNIGA—tied with "BLOOD LUNGE!" by DOUG MOENCH & RUSS HEATH for third place.
4) "BLOOD STALKER!" by LARRY LEIBER & JESUS BLASCO, and in last place by default—
5) VAMPIRE OF THE INK!" our uncredited inside front cover by &

The name of the game is to list your votes separately following your letter (otherwise we have to guess in what order ya liked 'em by your comments), and to send the results to:

VAMPIRE TALES
Marvel Magazine Group
575 Madison Avenue
New York, NY 10022

FINIS

FEARSOME FEATURES, FAR-OUT FABRICATIONS, AND FICTIONAL CONFIGURATIONS!

ITEM! The March winds are tossing around the tons of typewriting paper as we let's sleekly saunter into our astounding announcements rambunctious revelations, and pandemonious predictions before we've completely blown our papyrus wad.

ITEM! First some bad news and some good news. For Marvel bad news always seems to travel in threes. So it is, with no small amount of regret, that we announce the temporary cancellation of HAUNT OF HORROR, TALES OF THE ZOMBIE, MONSTERS UNLEASHED. Hold it! Hold it! Before you deluge us with those zillions of tacking packages, let us explain what we're doing for a mere moment. You Frantic Ones have been besieging us for more and more new magazines and quite frankly we just can't keep adding more mags to our already crisis-laden issue schedules, without cancelling some of our other books. There's only so much any trained armadillo can produce before going stark-raving crazy. So we've shelved the above three titles for the nonce. But in the meantime...

ITEM! ...which brings us to the *good news!* Hang loose, heroes, 'cause we're gonna let you in on our two newest black-and-white bombshells! Are you ready? Our first fantastic phantasmagona is the ever-lovin'... ever-demanded DOC SAVAGE, THE MAN OF BRONZE! The very first ish of this tintinabulating title features a 50 page epic extravaganza produced by Devil-May-Care DOUG MOENCH and Big JOHN BUSCEMA! And frankly, effendi, if that doesn't grab ya, there's also our *exclusive interview* with GEORGE PAL, the man responsible for the up-coming DOC SAVAGE movie-masterpiece! All this and more awaits you in DOC SAVAGE! On sale in June!

ITEM! And, as if all that weren't enough to wrap you right out of your tree, we're also adding KULL AND THE BARBARIANS! That's right, King Kull is back—and better than ever! And wait until you see what's backing up our Howardian hero. Frankie One! Once again Marvel is on the move!

ITEM! Y'know, sometimes we get so wrapped up in our purely ponderous ever-lovin' expansions we tend to let our already established glitzy goodies slip our minds. Sooo, if you'll pardon our polsatin' pride, we'd like to remind you that if you haven't joined F.O.O.M., our own fun-hilugginer fun-filled fan-club—well people, you just don't know what you're missing! We kid thee not! For a paltry $2.50 you get a membership card, a poster, sensational stickers and a four-issue sub to FOOM Magazine. All that plus discounts on all our merely marvelous merchandise. So get to it, true believers! Send you sheckles to FOOM, c/o MARVEL COMICS GROUP, 575 MADISON AVENUE, NEW YORK, N.Y. 10022.

ITEM! Now then, back to our regularly scheduled plugs and unabashed ad-hypes! Pop the corks and pass out the ee-gars! We're celebratin' 'cause Slugg'n' SONNY TRINIDAD and his marvelous Missus announced the arrival of a blushing boy (Sonny's sonny?) on December 19th! From all of us here in the Bullpen—congrats! Also a tip of the Marvel get-well card to Magnificent MARY DeZUNIGA, whose just come out of the hospital after a long week's stay. Take care, Mary—and the Bullpen sends you our best!

ITEM! And last, but not least, coming in the sensational second issue of MARVEL PREVIEW—the PUNISHER! You heard it right. Tiger Fresh from his appearances in the pages of SPIDER-MAN, with a sensational script by Merry GERRY CONWAY, and art by Terrific TONY DeZUNIGA! Plus a back-up feature starring DOMINQUE FORTUNE by Hilarious HOWIE CHAYKIN and Lively LEN WEIN! Gee whiz says Christmas comes only once a year!

ITEM! And now on to our cavortin' checklist!

UNKNOWN WORLDS OF SCIENCE FICTION #3. "Rapent Harlequin Said The Tick-Teck Man," Harlan Ellison's award winning SF tale of a future-gone-mad is finally adapted by the titanic talents of Rascally ROY THOMAS and Affable ALEX NINO. Also! An exclusive interview with FRANK HERBERT, the author of DUNE... *and* a brand *new* story on Dune world. ON SALE *February 25.*

DRACULA LIVES #12. The Prince of Evil in his early years—spreading terror across the peasant countryside a super special movie-length tale of terror. Also: "Sins Of The Father!" A Dracula short-shocker. ON SALE *March 4.*

PLANET OF THE APES #8. "The Planet Inhenters"—a simian masterwork by Demonic DOUG MOENCH and Monkeyish (?) MIKE PLOOG. Also: Chapter three of "Beneath The Planet Of The Apes!" ON SALE *March 18.*

SAVAGE TALES #10. KA-ZAR unleashed in the Savage Land! And all his side. Zabu! Also featuring, SHANNA the SHE-DEVIL! ON SALE *March 25.*

DEADLY HANDS OF KUNG FU #12. A special JAMES BOND issue, with a bonus fact and photo feature on "The Man With The Golden Gun!" Plus: Shang Chi, Master of Kung Fu, and Sons Of The Tiger! ON SALE *April 10.*

AT LAST, THE GREATEST EVENT IN THIS OR ANY OTHER CENTURY!

THE MIGHTY MARVEL CON comes alive!

Four incredible days! Four fun-filled nights! The most incredible Comicon ever! With guest stars! All the Bullpen greats! And even MORE!

Now remember the dates: MARCH 21-24. And the location: THE HOTEL COMMODORE—right above GRAND CENTRAL STATION in fun-city itself.

DON'T *DARE* MISS THIS ONE, FRANTIC ONES! IT'S THE COMICON YOU'VE BEEN WAITING FOR!

MURITANIA IS MAGNIFICENT IN THE DUSK, PROUDLY, SHE CLEAVES A SLICK THROUGH THROUGH THE CRIMSON-GLAZED ATLANTIC... AND SEEMS ALMOST SMUG IN HER STATUS AS THE WORLD'S PREMIERE LUXURY-LINER.
AND WELL SHE SHOULD BE--FOR GRACING HER GLEAMING DECKS IS A FULL COMPLEMENT OF THAT COMPLACENT HORDE KNOWN AS THE BEAUTIFUL PEOPLE. THE WEALTHY AND THE GLAMOROUS, JADED SOPHISTICATES AND DECADENT SYBARITES, THE FAVORED EXPONENTS OF HAUTE COUTURE AND SLOVENLY CHIC ALIKE.
GLITTER AND GAIETY BUOY THEM AS MUCH AS THE MURITANIA'S PROW. BUT SADLY, AND IS DE RIGEUR, THEY ARE NOT AS IMPRESSED WITH THE MAGNIFECENCE OF DUSK--
--AS THEY ARE WITH THEIR OWN PRESENCE.
GET A FRESH CASE OF CHAMPAGNE FROM CARGO, EDDIE. WE DON'T WANT THE PASSENGERS GETTING DRY WHISTLES.
YES, SIR.
CHAMPAGNE--! I'D LIKE TO TAKE A BOTTLE AND STICK IT--
WAIT A MINUTE--WHAT'S THAT?
PINEAPPLES, WELL IF THEY'RE STREWN ALL OVER THE FLOOR--
--WHAT THE BLOODY BLUE DEVIL IS IN THEIR CRATE--?
PRYING THE CRATE OPEN...
AARGH!
--THE CREWMAN LEARNS THAT SOME QUESTIONS SHOULD NEVER BE ASKED.

Story DOUG MOENCH Art SONNY TRINIDAD

IT IS OVER NOW. THE THIRST HAS BEEN SLAKED, AND THE LAST SWALLOW OF BLOOD HAS BEEN FOUL. FOR WITH THE RETURN OF SANITY, BRIGHT LUST IS USURPED BY STARK HORROR...
AGAIN--! I'VE MURDERED AGAIN--!!
MY GOD--WHEN WILL IT END?! HOW MANY TIMES IS THIS?
HOW MANY TIMES WILL I BE DAMNED TO HELL AGAINST MY WILL--?!
HEY, EDDIE--! WHAT'S KEEPING YOU? THE CAPTAIN WANTS THAT CHAMPAGNE--NOW!
YOU DOWN THERE, EDDIE.?
FOOTSTEPS--! HE'S COMING DOWN THE STAIRS...
EDDIE--!!
GOOD LORD--THE BLOOD...!!

UHNN-!!
SKWOP!
COULDN'T LET HIM... FIND ME..
BUT I CAN'T KILL HIM EITHER, NOT ANOTHER ONE-- SO SOON THE THIRST IS GONE. I DON'T NEED IT...
I'M IN CONTROL NOW...
BUT I CAN'T STAY HERE--THEY'LL COME LOOKING FOR THOSE TWO. GOT TO FIND A NEW HIDING PLACE..
"IT'S THE DINNER HOUR-- MAYBE THE DECKS WILL BE CLEAR...
MURITAN
"... BUT WHETHER THEY ARE OR NOT, I'VE GOT TO CHANCE IT--!
THANK GOD IT'S SAFE.
THERE'S NO ONE AROUND...
BUT WHERE DO I GO FROM HERE--?
WHERE--?
DON'T LOOK SO VEXED. STOWING AWAY ISN'T A CAPITAL CRIME...
WHO--?!?

MORGANA ST CLAIR.
PLEASE TO MEET YOU...
I'M AFRAID HUNGER HAS MADE ME RATHER PALE.. BUT THEN THE WAVES HAVE ME RATHER QUEASY. I BELIEVE IT'S CALLED A MEXICAN STAND-OFF...
.. BUT STILL, THERE'S NO SENSE IN WASTING FOOD.
LISTEN, WHY DON'T YOU RELAX..? I WON'T.. SNITCH.
BUT--
I SAID RELAX. I KNOW WHO YOU ARE.
YOU.. YOU KNOW--?
BUT OF COURSE I RECOGNIZED YOU INSTANTLY, AND WHO ISN'T FAMILIAR WITH THE WORLD-RENOWNED DR MICHAEL MORBIUS -- OR THE UNFORTUNATE MALAISE WHICH HAS AFFLICTED HIM.
THEN WHY WON'T YOU ALERT THE SHIP?
PERHAPS BECAUSE I SEE IN YOU A PART OF MYSELF. BUT THERE REALLY IS LITTLE TIME TO TALK YOU KNOW.
I SUGGEST YOU WEAR MY CAPE AND IF YOU'RE FORTUNATE...
NO ONE WILL NOTICE YOU BEFORE WE REACH MY STATEROOM.
BUT IT DOESN'T MAKE SENSE FOR YOU TO--
COME ON, MORBIUS.
BEFORE SOMEONE DECIDES TO TAKE AN AFTER-DINNER STROLL DOWN THE DECK.

THOUGH PERHAPS BAFFLING THE DECISION IS NOT DIFFICULT. MORBIUS DONS THE VOLUMINOUS CLOAK--
NOW THAT'S THE SENSIBLE ATTITUDE.
--AND FOLLOWS HIS ALLURINGLY MYSTERIOUS SAMARITAN. IN BETTER TIMES, MORBIUS MIGHT HAVE BEEN ATTRACTED TO THIS DARKLY SENSUOUS WOMAN...MIGHT HAVE BECOME OBSESSED WITH HER SULTRY BEAUTY...
BUT NOW HE FEARS AN OBSESSION, WITH HER BLOOD.
COME IN... SAID THE SPIDER TO THE FLY...
MAKE YOURSELF COMFORTABLE IN MY DARK AND TANGLED WEB.
AH-- THANK YOU...
I'LL ONLY TAKE A MINUTE TO CHANGE -- AND THEN WE CAN GO UP ON DECK TO WATCH THE FIREWORKS DISPLAY TOGETHER!
BUT I CAN'T GO UP ON THE DECK AGAIN--!
OF COURSE YOU CAN-- AND THEY'LL PROBABLY AWARD YOU FIRST PRIZE IN THE COSTUME BALL.
I--
... SEE.
A STRANGELY APPEALING WOMAN... STRANGE INDEED.

SHORTLY, AS THE BEAUTIFUL PEOPLE VOLUNTARILY DISGUISE THEMSELVES IN RIOTOUS HUES OF THE GROTESQUE AND BIZARRE...
THEY SHOULD BE LIGHTING THE ROMAN CANDLES SOON DO YOU LIKE ROMAN CANDLES?
I DID... ONCE.
BUT ARE YOU CERTAIN I WON'T BE DETECTED HERE?
POSITIVE.
ALL RIGHT.. I CHOOSE TO BELIEVE YOU. IT'S EASIER THAN WORRYING. BUT YOU STILL HAVEN'T TOLD ME WHY YOU'VE BEFRIENDED ME...
BECAUSE YOU'RE NOT EVIL. YOU'RE A VICTIM OF EVIL...
AS I AM
YOU'RE A VAMPIRE-- FORCED TO KILL FOR BLOOD
WHOOOSHH
WE'RE BOTH HELPLESS.
WHAT DO YOU MEAN?
AND I, TOO, AM FORCED TO KILL.
YOU...?
FORCED TO KILL VAMPIRES.
LOOK AT THEM UP THERE-- DEADLY EXPLOSIONS TURNED INTO THINGS OF BEAUTY. THE PURPLE ONES ARE ESPECIALLY--
FORGET THE FIRE-WORKS, WOMAN...

PLEASE, I TOLD YOU MY NAME WAS MORGANA.
VERY WELL, MORGANA-- EXPLAIN WHAT YOU'VE JUST SAID.
IT'S VERY SIMPLE; I AM FORCED TO KILL VAMPIRES BUT DON'T GET ME WRONG-- I'M NO ALTRUIST, OR SELF-APPOINTED CRUSADER AGAINST THE SUPERNATURAL.
THE BARE TRUTH IS, I ACT PURELY IN SELF-DEFENSE-- KILLING THEM BEFORE THEY CAN KILL ME.. AS THEY HAVE ALREADY KILLED MY HUSBAND.. YOU SEE--AND BELIEVE OR NOT --THERE IS A CONSPIRACY AFOOT IN ENGLAND..
. A SINISTER AND QUITE DIABOLICAL PLOT TO SYSTEMATICALLY ASSUME THE CONTROL AND WEALTH OF THE COUNTRY.
IT IS A CONSPIRACY OF VAMPIRES--AN ARISTOCRACY OF THE UNDEAD, YOU MIGHT SAY. CONSISTING OF FORMERLY INFLUENTIAL PEOPLE OF GOOD STANDING AND EXEMPLARY REPUTATIONS
BEFORE THEY DIED AND WERE REBORN AS VAMPIRES, THE MEMBERS OF THIS CONSPIRACY OF THE UNDEAD SERVED IN PARLIAMENT, OR ON THE EXECUTIVE BOARDS OF LARGE CORPORATIONS-- OR WERE MERELY BORN INTO WEALTHY FAMILIES, OR EVEN ROYALTY.
THEY KILL, AS YOU DO, FOR BLOOD-- BUT ALSO TO AVENGE THEMSELVES ON FORMER ENEMIES, OR TO CONVERT MEN AND WOMEN OF POWER TO THE CULT OF VAMPIRISM WHERE OBEDIENCE IN MATTERS OF DECISION IS ASSURED
YOU SEE IN THEIR LIVES THESE PEOPLE ACQUIRED A TASTE FOR POWER AND WEALTH, THAT TASTE, IT WOULD SEEM, DIES HARDER THAN ANY LIFE.
BUT YOU DON'T BELIEVE ME, DO YOU..?
NO..
YES.. IT IS DIFFICULT TO BELIEVE, ISN'T IT? WOULD YOU BE CONVINCED IF I PROVED THERE WAS ANOTHER VAMPIRE --BESIDES YOURSELF-- ABOARD THIS SHIP AT THIS VERY MOMENT.?
A TRUE VAMPIRE--WHO WISHES TO MURDER ME..?
I..
DON'T SAY IT-- YOU THINK I'M INSANE.
GO TO STATEROOM 228--THE ROOM IN WHICH I AM REGISTERED, AND THE ROOM WHICH I HAVE EXCHANGED WITH ANOTHER WOMAN..

GO ON--AND IF WHAT YOU FIND IN THAT ROOM SHOULD CONVINCE YOU..
WELL, JUST TAKE THIS CARD.
BUT WHAT ARE WE GOING TO DO ABOUT IT CAPTAIN--? THERE WASN'T A DROP OF BLOOD LEFT IN EDDIE'S BODY...
OOOOH... LOOK AT THAT ONE!
--AND I WAS KNOCKED UNCONSCIOUS BY A SINGLE BLOW!
FOR GOD'S SAKE, THOSE FIRE-WORKS ARE STAINED WITH EDDIE'S BLOOD--THERE ARE CREWMEN MISSING--!
WHAT ARE WE GOING TO DO--?
I HAVEN'T THE SLIGHTEST--BUT WE'RE CERTAINLY NOT GOING TO SEND THE PASSENGERS INTO PANIC WITH SOME CRAZY STORY ABOUT A VAMPIRE.
MAYBE IT IS CRAZY, BUT SOMEBODY RIPPED OFF EDDIE'S BLOOD AND--
HEY--GET A LOAD OF THIS COSTUME--! A HIPPIE DRACULA!
WAIT A MINUTE--IN A COSTUME PARTY, HE COULD BE ANYONE.
EVEN SOME-ONE IN AN OBVIOUS COSTUME--!
WHERE ARE YOU GOING?
TO TAKE A LOOK AT THE MASK BEHIND A FACE.
PARTIALLY CONVINCED THAT MORGANA ST. CLAIR IS EITHER A LUNATIC OR HALLUCINATING (AFTER ALL, DRUGS HAVE BECOME QUITE FASHIONABLE AMONG THE EUPHORIA-ATTUNED BEAUTIFUL PEOPLE) MORBIUS NEVERTHELESS FEELS OBLIGATED TO KEEP AN OPEN MIND. THUS, HE PROCEEDS DOWN THE STATEROOM CORRIDOR
UNAWARE OF THE CREWMAN FOLLOWING BEHIND.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 19

ENJOY THE SELF CONFIDENCE OF BEING ABLE TO DEFEND YOURSELF

THESE COURSES WILL TEACH YOUR ENTIRE FAMILY TO COPE WITH ANY PERSONAL VIOLENCE THEY MAY ENCOUNTER

THERE WERE HUNDREDS OF THOUSANDS OF VIOLENT ACTS LAST YEAR — DON'T BECOME A STATISTIC

For the millions of people interested in Kung Fu, Karate or Self Defense . . . here is the answer! John Natividad's eight deadly courses of International Self Defense can be learned in your own home in only 30 minutes a day.

The very first hour after you receive the 8 courses you will be on your way to develop powerful self DEFENSE KNOW HOW that will help you in any tough situation.

It doesn't matter how small or large you are; whether you are weak or strong; young or old . . . this fantastic method of self defense could SAVE YOUR LIFE or a loved one.

1

COURSE #1
This quick training course includes warm up, loosening and strengthening exercises such as sit ups, leg raises, push ups and basic exercises with which most of us are already familiar. Because of the kicking techniques used in Karate this course emphasizes stretching. Illustrated with 29 comprehensive photographs.

2

COURSE #2
This course covers two basic techniques:
1. To neutralize clothing and body grabbers and render them helpless.
2. To disable or knock out an attacker WITH A KNIFE. Illustrated with 40 comprehensive photographs.

3

COURSE #3
This course teaches you how to use your legs to impact devastating blows. The proper training of your natural ability to kick will give you two more TOUGH SHOTS at you would be attacker. Illustrated with 44 comprehensive photographs.

4

COURSE #4
Sweeps and Throws are easily learned by the average person. With this technique a child could throw an adult. This technique uses the attackers own body weight to knock him out. Sweeps and Throws combined with effective kicks will MAKE YOU A SUPER FIGHTER. Illustrated with 20 comprehensive photographs.

5

COURSE #5
This course will teach you how to use your hands, elbows and fists most efficiently. This course also teaches proper focus and movement to hit hard on VITAL AREAS of your attacker. Illustrated with 26 comprehensive photographs.

6

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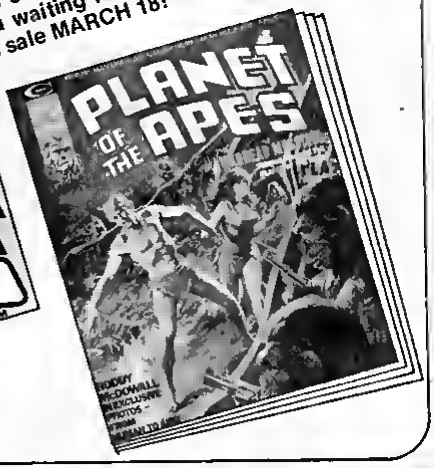

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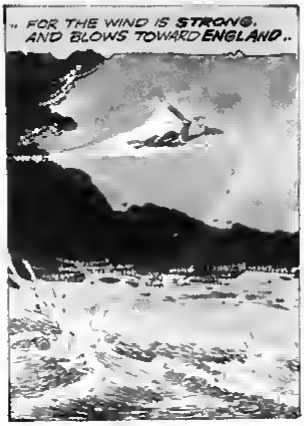
INSIDE, THE SHOCKING PROOF LIES DEAD ON THE STATEROOM FLOOR... BRIGHT BLOOD STILL OOZING FROM THE LACERATIONS ON HER THROAT...
TWO PUNCTURED GASHES -- THE HELLISH MARK OF A VAMPIRE..
-- A VAMPIRE WHO HAD SLAIN THE WOMAN EVEN AS SHE PREPARED TO DRESS FOR THE GALA COSTUME BALL...
ALL RIGHT, BEN -- HE MIGHT BE DANGEROUS, BUT WE'VE GOT HIM CORNERED IN HERE..
JUST TAKE IT SLOW AND DON'T MOVE UNTIL I DO--!
GOTCHA
DECKHAND AND PORTER STALK FORWARD NOW HESITANTLY... AWKWARDLY. THEY WOULD BE EASY TO TAKE -- EASY TO SLAY..
NO -- WHATEVER THEY WANT TO DO TO ME THEY'RE STILL INNOCENT. I MUST FIND ANOTHER WAY--!
FRANTICALLY CASTING HIS EYES AROUND THE CRAMPED STATEROOM, MORBIUS FINDS THAT OTHER WAY..
-- IN THE FORM OF A PORTHOLE.
WHAT THE--?
KREESCH
SHARDS OF GLASS PITCH DOWNWARD TO THE SEA...
BUT MORBIUS SPECTACULARLY RISES ALOFT HIS HOLLOW BONES RENDERING HIM NEARLY WEIGHTLESS, HIS WINGS SCOOPING THE STIFF WIND..
AND LIKE A BAT, HE SOARS UPWARD--

--AND SWOOPS DRAMATICALLY OVER THE CROWDED DECK.
DO YOU SEE THAT--?!
AND WHEN HE ALIGHTS, IT WOULD SEEM THAT JADED THRILL-SEEKERS BECOME CONSIDERABLY LESS JADED WHEN FACED WITH ACTUAL THRILLS...
EEEEE!
THAT'S HIM-- STOP HIM!!
THEY SWARM AT HIM NOW, CREWMEN SNATCHING CHAINS, GRAPPLING HOOKS, OARS-- ANYTHING WHICH MIGHT CONCEIVABLY SERVE AS A WEAPON...
RUSH HIM TOGETHER--!!
AND THOUGH MORBIUS IS CONFIDENT HE CAN DEFEND HIMSELF...
OOOPH!!
...AND DEFEND HIMSELF WELL...
YIIIII!!
...HE KNOWS HE CANNOT DEFEND HIMSELF FOREVER. THEIR NUMBER INCREASES RAPIDLY NOW--FOR EACH CREWMAN WHO FALLS SIX MORE RISE FROM BELOW DECK...
ALL RIGHT, BOYS-- HE'S REACHED THE END OF THE SHIP NOW--! HE'S GOT NOWHERE TO GO!
THE MAN IN MORBIUS AGREES WITH THE CREWMAN'S STATEMENT.
...BUT THE VAMPIRE IN HIM PAUSES FOR A VICIOUS SNARL...

..BEFORE CONCEDING INEVITABLE DEFEAT AND HURLING HIMSELF FROM THE HOSTILE SHIP...

..TO SEEK FREEDOM IN THE NIGHT WIND..
FAREWELL MORBIUS WE WILL MEET AGAIN..
..AND VERY SOON, I THINK.

AT FIRST, LUCK IS WITH THE LIVING VAMPIRE..


.. FOR THE WIND IS STRONG, AND BLOWS TOWARD ENGLAND..

THUS, IT ALMOST SEEMS HE WILL ATTAIN HIS DESTINATION EVEN WITHOUT THE SHIP...
BUT THEN--

THE WIND-- IT'S DYING I'M BEGINNING TO FALL--!
THAT PLANK AHEAD..

IF I CAN REACH IT--

AH! AT LEAST I HAVE SOMETHING TO CLING TO..
BUT THE COAST MUST BE HUNDREDS OF MILES AWAY...
EVEN IF I MAKE IT, I'LL HAVE TO GO THROUGH AN ENTIRE DAY OF DIRECT SUNLIGHT!
I'VE NEVER EVEN DETERMINED. IF I CAN SURVIVE THROUGH THAT MUCH OF IT...

A BARONIAL MANSION THIRTEEN MILES BEYOND THE BUSTLE OF LONDON...
WILL THERE BE ANYTHING ELSE, SIR?

NO, THAT WILL BE ALL FOR THE NIGHT WINSTON.
VERY GOOD SIR

HAVE A PLEASANT EVENING, SIR.

AGH!

KRASH
WHAT THE DEVIL--?!

WINSTON!
ANSWER ME, MAN! WHAT'S THE MEANING OF THAT BLOODY RACKET--?
WHAT HAVE YOU BROKEN NOW..?

GOOD LORD--!!
SIGNIFICANTLY, CURTAINS FLUTTER IN THE BREEZE OF AN OPEN WINDOW...
OMINOUSLY, LORD ROBERT BENTLEY FAILS TO NOTICE.

WINSTON, CAN YOU HEAR ME--?
IS IT YOUR HEART--?
THE SHADOWS WOULD DEMUR...
...BUT INSTEAD THEY CHOOSE TO REMAIN SILENT...
...IF NOT UNSEEN.
WHO--?!?
HARKINS--?!?
YES... I WAS HARKINS... BUT NOW DEAR ROBERT--
--NOW I AM DEAD.
NO--IT CAN'T BE--!
OH, BUT IT CAN, LORD ROBERT... AS YOU WILL SOON LEARN.
NO--IT CAN'T BE! STAY BACK--!
STAY AWAY FROM ME, I SAY--!?
HELP--! HELP ME!! HEEELLP!
BUT LORD ROBERT BENTLEY'S HELP ALREADY LIES DEAD ON THE FLOOR... CURSED FOR HIS CLUMSINESS.

DUSK, THREE DAYS LATER...
THE SUN HAS BEEN HARSH THESE PAST DAYS...
...UNUSUALLY HARSH FOR THIS REGION'S NORMAL CLIMATE...
...AND NO ONE KNOWS THIS BETTER THAN THE SORRY FORM CLINGING TO A PIECE OF FLOTSAM WITH HIS LAST SHRED OF STRENGTH...
...MORBIUS, THE LIVING VAMPIRE...
HE HAD UNDERESTIMATED THE DISTANCE TO THE ENGLISH COAST, AS WELL AS THE TIME REQUIRED TO REACH IT...
BUT A QUESTION HAS BEEN ANSWERED...
HE CAN SURVIVE A DAY OF DIRECT SUNLIGHT...
INDEED, HE HAS SURVIVED THREE...
...BUT JUST BARELY, THUS RAVAGED BY EXPOSURE... EXHAUSTED... AND A THREADLINE FROM DEATH...
THIRSTING...
...HE STAGGERS UP THE BEACH.
AND ELSEWHERE--
I'M SORRY I RESISTED. I UNDERSTAND NOW.
NO APOLOGY IS NECESSARY, BROTHER. NONE OF US UNDERSTOOD BEFORE OUR INITIATION TO THE NIGHT.
SUFFICE TO SAY THAT WE WELCOME YOU AS THE LAST TO JOIN THE TABLE OF TWELVE. THERE IS ONE OTHER... SOMEWHAT UNUSUAL AND POSSIBLY IMPORTANT-- CANDIDATE ELIGIBLE FOR ACCEPTANCE TO OUR TABLE...
...BUT SINCE HIS WILLINGNESS HAS YET TO BE ASCERTAINED, I SUGGEST WE PROCEED WITH OUR NEXT MATTER OF BUSINESS...
OUR NEXT VICTIM MUST BE A PERSON OF INFLUENCE-- SOMEONE WHO CAN ADVANCE OUR CAUSE...
...AND ELEVATE THE STATUS OF THE BROTHERHOOD OF JUDAS.
- FOR THE BLOOD IS THE LIFE.

MIGHT THAT NOT BE THE PRIME MINISTER-- OR THE HEAD OF THE LABOR PARTY!
WE HAVE ASSURED YOU THAT NO APOLOGY IS NECESSARY, BROTHER ROBERT. BUT PLEASE BEAR IN MIND THAT YOU ARE NEW TO THE BROTHERHOOD--AND AS SUCH, LIKELY TO MAKE A FOOL OF YOURSELF WITH LITTLE DIFFICULTY.
OUR OBJECTIVES, BROTHER ROBERT--MUST PROCEED GRADUALLY. THE PRIME MINISTER WOULD BE MISSED IN THE DAYLIGHT HOURS,
RELIGION, I SAY IT'S TIME TO INFILTRATE THE CHURCH--!
I AGREE,
LET THE CROSS-WIELDING PRIESTS LEARN THE GLORY OF THE NIGHT!
YES--LET THEM FEEL THE FIRE OF THEIR OWN CROSSES!
THEN IT IS DECIDED. A PRIEST SHALL DIE...
...AND BE REBORN TO A NEW RELIGION--AT SUNDAY'S NO-NIGHT--!
THE TASTE IS BITTER WITH A TANG LESS THAN SATISFYING. BUT IT HAS REPLENISHED HIS STRENGTH AND WILL SUFFICE, MORBIUS KNOWS...
...AT LEAST UNTIL HE ONCE AGAIN MOVES AMONG HUMANS.
BUT NOW IS A TIME FOR REMORSE...
...A QUIET, MELANCHOLY REMORSE.
YES, THE ANIMAL WAS MORE GENTLE AND INNOCENT BY FAR... THAN MANY PEOPLE HE HAS KNOWN.
BUT HE CANNOT BROOD FOREVER OVER SUCH THOUGHTS...
...WHEN THERE IS ALWAYS THE FUTURE TO CONTEMPLATE.
THAT BEACH LOOKED LIKE IT MIGHT BE A VACATION SPOT IN THE SUMMER
MUST BE A ROAD THROUGH THESE WOODS SOMEWHERE,
BUT HOW TO FIND IT...?
FIND IT, AND FOLLOW IT TO HIS PURPOSE HERE IN ENGLAND. FOLLOW IT TO A CURE FOR HIS VAMPIRIC TAINT... FOLLOW IT TO--

--LONDON... AND THE ESTATE OF A FORMER FRIEND...
THE ESTATE OF DR. SAMUEL HARKINS, WORLD RENOWNED RESEARCHER INTO DISEASES OF THE BLOOD...
DISEASES, PERHAPS SIMILAR TO THE ONE WHICH AFFLICTS MORBIUS--AND CURSES HIM WITH AN EXISTENCE SIMULATING THAT OF A VAMPIRE.
IRONIC, THEN, THAT THE ONE MAN WHO HAD RECEIVED EVEN MORE RECOGNITION THAN DR. HARKINS SHOULD NOW SEEK HIS AID...
BUT DR. MICHAEL MORBIUS CANNOT AFFORD TO BE PROUD
TOK
HE HAS FAILED TO CURE HIMSELF, AND HE IS DESPERATE.
EXCUSE ME, BROTHERS IT SEEMS SOMEONE IS AT MY DOOR...
TOK TOK TOK
AND FROM THE SOUND OF THE RAPPING, IT COULD PROVE TO BE RATHER URGENT BUSINESS INDEED.
MICHAEL--! GOOD LORD, MAN, HOW LONG HAS IT BEEN--?
BUT YOUR FACE-- SO PALLID ALMOST LIKE DEATH ITSELF
UNDOUBTEDLY ATTRIBUTABLE TO THE TRAGIC DISEASE WHICH HAS OVERTAKEN YOU...
YOU, KNOW OF MY DISEASE?
BUT OF COURSE..
COME IN, MAN--YOU CAN'T STAND OUT THERE ALL NIGHT.
NOW THEN, HOW COULD I NOT KNOW OF YOUR DISEASE? I AM A SPECIALIST, AFTER ALL.. YOUR INFIRMITY-- AS WELL AS YOUR EXPLOITS, I MIGHT ADD--ARE A FAVORITE SUBJECT OF THE NEWS-PAPER JOURNAL-ISTS, YOU KNOW..
IN FACT, I'VE BEEN EXPECTING YOUR VISIT.
YOU HAVE.?
YES--MOST ANXIOUSLY, AND QUITE LOGICALLY.
AFTER ALL, WE ARE, BIRDS OF A FEATHER, SO TO SPEAK.
BUT COME-- WE CAN SPEAK MORE COMFORTABLY IN THE LIBRARY.

BESIDES, I SHOULD LIKE YOU TO MEET SOME OF MY ASSOCIATES..
MORBIUS ENTERS THE AUSTERE LIBRARY...
...AND FACES THE TABLE OF TWELVE MINUS ONE A SOMEWHAT DISCONCERTING AND INCONSPICUOUS GROUP AT BEST..
THE IMAGE BROUGHT TO MIND IS A BIZARRE ONE: AN ASCETIC BOARD OF MONKS, CONVENED TO DISCUSS THE AGGRANDIZEMENT OF CORPORATE FINANCES...
HARKINS
WHO ARE THESE-
SLAM
THE FUTURE RULERS OF ENGLAND, MORBIUS -- THE BROTHERHOOD OF JUDAS.
JUDAS ?!
YES, MORBIUS-- AND WE WELCOME YOU TO OUR TABLE.
INDEED, WE HAVE LONG BEEN ATTEMPTING TO CONTACT YOU. WE HAVE EVEN DISPATCHED SEVERAL EMISSARIES FOR THAT PURPOSE ALONE..
--BUT IT WOULD SEEM YOUR NEW LIFESTYLE HAS RENDERED YOU SOMEWHAT INACCESSIBLE -- EVEN TO AN OLD FRIEND SUCH AS MYSELF.
BUT NOW THAT YOU ARE FINALLY HERE, WE WOULD LIKE TO MAKE A PROPOSAL TO YOU..
WHAT KIND OF PROPOSAL, HARKINS?
WE WOULD LIKE YOU TO JOIN US..
"...IN A GROWING ALLIANCE OF THE UNDEAD.
THE SMILE IS A WICKED ONE CROWNED WITH THE TWIN FANGS OF A VAMPIRE... BARBED AND GLEAMING...
AND MORBIUS CAN DO NOTHING BUT STARE--APPALLED --AT THIS MAN HE HAD HOPED WOULD CURE HIM OF VAMPIRISM... NOW A VAMPIRE HIMSELF...
...AND ADVOCATE OF SAME.
YES, MICHAEL... WE ARE ALL VAMPIRES--A UNITED BROTHERHOOD OF VAMPIRES..
A BROTHERHOOD WHOSE RANKS SWELL WITH EACH PASSING NIGHT AND YOUR PLACE AT THIS TABLE, MORBIUS, WOULD PROVE AN ASSET TO OUR GROWING ORGANIZATION..

YOUR KNOWLEDGE IN THE FIELDS OF SCIENCE AND MEDICINE TRANSCENDS EVEN MY OWN JOIN US, MORBIUS--AND SHARE WITH US THAT KNOWLEDGE GIVE TO US WHAT YOU HAVE TO OFFER...
AND RECEIVE FROM US WHAT WE CAN OFFER YOU! THE GLORY OF THE NIGHT, MORBIUS--THE SECURITY OF NUMBERS...
...AND A POWERFUL POSITION AMONGST THE FUTURE RULERS OF ENGLAND AND THE WORLD!!
NOOOO!!
YOU'RE INSANE, HARKINS--ALL OF YOU!! I WOULD NEVER JOIN AN ORGANIZATION OF THAT WHICH I DESPISE--OF THAT WHICH HAS TURNED ME INTO A MONSTER!!
I WOULD NEVER EMBRACE FILTH SUCH AS YOU--!!
HAVE A CARE WITH YOUR WORDS, MORBIUS! WE WERE AFRAID OF A RESPONSE SUCH AS THIS.
WE WERE AFRAID THAT YOUR STATUS AS A LIVING VAMPIRE--AS ONE WHO IS NOT TRULY A MEMBER OF THE UNDEAD--MIGHT PRESERVE A CAPACITY FOR WEAKNESS, FOR REMORSE AND CONSCIENCE--!
SLOWLY, THE ROBED AND COWLED BROTHERHOOD RISES...
IT IS UNFORTUNATE THAT YOU HAVE BORNE OUR FEARS INTO THE OPEN, FOR YOU HAVE NOW REVEALED YOURSELF AS A THREAT TO US--
--AND YOUR POTENTIAL AS A THREAT CONTRIBUTED TO OUR REASONS FOR WISHING TO CONTACT YOU--!
YOU SEE, DEAR MICHAEL, WE WERE AWARE OF THE POSSIBLE NECESSITY--
--OF ELIMINATING YOU,
TAKE HIM, BROTHERS--TAKE HIM IN BLOOD!!
...IS ABOARD THE MURITANIA, THEN, MORBIUS FINDS HIMSELF TRAPPED...

--AND FORCED TO FIGHT FOR HIS LIFE--A LIFE HE CAN NEVER CHERISH...AND YET CAN NEVER SURRENDER.
BUT UNLIKE THE BATTLE ABOARD THE MURITANIA, THERE IS MORE THAN OPEN SEA AT MORBIUS' BACK--THERE ARE PROPS FOR THIS TABLEAU OF VIOLENCE..PROPS THE LIVING VAMPIRE PUTS TO GOOD USE...
--BEFORE HURLING HIMSELF INTO PERFORMANCE, IN BODY, IF NOT QUITE SOUL...
GET BACK, SCUM.!!
GET BACK BEFORE I RIP YOU APART WITH THE LAST SHRED OF DISGUST I COMMAND.!!
BUT, PERHAPS, A SEMBLANCE OF SOUL...
THEY LUNGE TOGETHER, WITH THE SPEED OF TEN AND THE STRENGTH OF A HUNDRED...
BUT IT IS NOTHING COMPARED TO THE RAGE OF ONE MAN...ONE MAN WHO SEES IN THESE VAMPIRES ALL THAT IS VILE AND DEPRAVED IN HIMSELF.
ALL THAT MUST BE DESTROYED...
YOU WANT TO RULE THE WORLD, FIENDS--
HUMP
UNFF
--WELL, TAKE THE WORLD THEN.!!
AND MAY IT STICK IN YOUR BLOOD-GULPING THROATS.!!
A RESPITE NOW, AND A CLEAR PATH TO--

--THE WINDOW.
KRASH
HE'S ESCAPING--! AFTER HIM!!
NO--!!
NO, MY BROTHERS... LET HIM FLEE
HE WILL STILL BE OURS... BEFORE THE GAME IS PLAYED OUT.
IT'S TRUE--!
A CONSPIRACY OF VAMPIRES-- JUST AS THE WOMAN CLAIMED..
THE WOMAN--! SHE GAVE ME A CARD...
Morgana St. Clair no 14 KENSINGTON LONDON, SW 3
MORGANA ST CLAIR IS NOT A PARTICULARLY VAIN WOMAN. HER BEAUTY WAS A GIFT OF BIRTH AND IT HAS REQUIRED ONLY MILD EFFORT TO PARLAY HER CONGENITAL BLESSING INTO AN EXISTENCE OF LUXURY AND LEISURE.
A STIFF BREEZE OFF HYDE PARK TOUCHES HER BOUDOIR WINDOW... A STIFF BREEZE--
TAK TAK TAK
--AND SOMETHING ELSE.
MORBIUS--!
I I'D GIVEN UP ON YOU-- THOUGHT YOU'D BEEN LOST TO THE SEA...
NO SUCH LUCK, MORGANA.
I'M STILL LIVING, AND PLAYING THE PART OF THE DEAD.

I CAN UNDERSTAND YOUR BITTERNESS. BUT STILL, YOU'RE HERE.. WHICH MEANS YOU MUST HAVE BEEN CONVINCED BY WHAT YOU SAW IN THAT STATEROOM.
I WAS MORS CONVINCED BY WHAT I JUST SAW IN THE LIBRARY OF AN OLD FRIEND...
BUT ONE THING STILL BOTHERS ME...WHY DIDN'T YOU REPORT THAT WOMAN'S DEATH ABOARD THE MURITANIA...?
BECAUSE NO ONE WOULD BELIEVE A VAMPIRE HAD DONE IT... BECAUSE I WOULD HAVE BEEN HELD FOR QUESTIONING... AND BECAUSE THEY WOULD HAVE LEARNED OF THE VAMPIRES, I'VE KILLED...!
.. AND BECAUSE THEY'D NEVER BELIEVE THEY WERE VAMPIRES EITHER.
I'VE NO WISH TO BE CONVICTED OF MURDER, MORBIUS
BUT YOU MUST TELL ME OF YOUR FRIEND'S LIBRARY--AND WHETHER YOU'RE WILLING TO JOIN ME IN AN ATTEMPT TO SRADICATE THIS BROTHERHOOD OF VAMPIRES...
ERADICATE..?
WOULD YOU RATHER JOIN THEM?
NO
GOOD. THEN WE SHALL TAKE A WALK--AND DISCUSS THE MATTER...
LONDON BY NIGHT: A PLACE OF LANDMARKS AND FOG, COBBLES AND HISTORY A TIMELESS CITY RICH IN ATMOSPHERE AND MYSTERY..
--MUST INFILTRATE THE GROUP, MORBIUS AND WE MUST DO IT OURSELVES-- GOING TO THE AUTHORITIES WOULD ONLY ASSURE US OF BUNKS IN BEDLAM.
THEY WEAR ROBES AND COWLS-- FAIRLY CONCEALING, IF WE KEEP OUR HEADS DOWN AND OUR SPEAKING TO A MUMBLED MINIMUM...
IT'S THE ONLY WAY, MORBIUS-- THE ONLY WAY TO LEARN HOW MANY MEMBERS THEY HAVE AND WHO SOME OF THEM ARE.
ARE YOU GAME..?
IT ALL SOUNDS A BIT JAMES BOND-ISH TO ME... BUT THEN, I HAVEN'T GOT ANY BETTER IDEAS.
THEN IT'S AGREED. BUT REMEMBER -- ONCE WE INFILTRATE THEM, WE'LL ATTEMPT TO TAKE THEM BY SURPRISE ONLY IF JEOPARDY IS AT AN ABSOLUTE MINIMUM.
I PROPOSE THIS SUNDAY AS THE DATE. IT MAY BE PURE COINCIDENCE, BUT SINCE EVERY ATTEMPT ON MY LIFE HAS OCCURED ON A SUNDAY.. IT WOULD SEEM TO BE THE ONE NIGHT THEY ARE MOST ACTIVE.
NOW-- SINCE WE KNOW THAT SAMUEL HARKINS IS ONE OF THE MEMBERS, WE'LL MEET IN FRONT OF HIS ESTATE...
... JUST AFTER DARK THIS SUNDAY.

I'D INVITE YOU TO STAY WITH ME UNTIL THEN, BUT..
BUT YOU'VE ALREADY BEEN IN THE PRESENCE OF A VAMPIRE'S THIRST—AND YOU DON'T WISH TO REPEAT THE EXPERIENCE...!
THAT'S A DELICATE WAY OF PHRASING IT MORBIUS...
I UNDERSTAND.
UNTIL SUNDAY, THEN.
AND HE LEAVES TO GREET THE FOG.
SUNDAY AT DUSK: DR SAMUEL HARKINS BRISKLY EMERGES FROM HIS HOME TO HAIL A TAXI...
HARKINS ENTERS THE CAB, NEVER NOTICING THE PARKED CAR LESS THAN HALF A -KILOMETER DOWN THE STREET..
.. A CAR WHICH WHICH COUGHS TO LIFE AS THE CAB PULLS AWAY..
.. AND A CAR WHICH FOLLOWS THE CAB DIRECTLY TO ST. CONSIDINE'S CATHEDRAL A TOWERING MASS OF MAJESTIC ARCHITECTURE SITUATED TO THE NORTH OF REGENT'S PARK...
HARKINS DEBARKS FROM THE CAB, STILL CARRYING HIS AMBIGUOUS PARCEL, AND HEADS FOR THE CATHEDRAL'S MAIN ENTRANCE...
A STRANGE AND EXTREMELY CONSPICUOUS HOUR TO VISIT A CHURCH... BUT APPARENTLY HARKINS IS SATISFIED THERE ARE NO WITNESSES TO HIS PECULIAR ACTIONS...

HE IS WRONG.
MUST BE CARRYING HIS ROBE IN THAT PACKAGE...
BUT WHAT DOES HE WANT AT A CHURCH--?
THAT'S WHAT WE'RE HERE TO FIND OUT, MORBIUS..
.. BUT I'D GUESS THEY'RE EITHER GOING TO RECRUIT A NEW MEMBER, OR MURDER AN OLD ENEMY. PROBABLY BOTH.
BUT HOW CAN THEY EVEN SET FOOT IN A CHURCH-- ALL THE CROSSES--!
THAT'S PROBABLY BEEN TAKEN CARE OF HOURS AGO... BY NOT-QUITE-UNDEAD UNDER-LINGS.
COME ON. --WE'D BETTER TRY SNEAKING IN THROUGH THE BACK
QUIET NOW... LIKE CHURCH-MICE..
PERFECT.
THERE'S TWO OF THEM--ALONE.
WAIT HERE.
HAS EVERYTHING BEEN PREPARED?
YES, RIGHT NOW THEY ARE BRINGING--
UFFF--!
FWAK!
COME ON.
QUICKLY. BEFORE THEY'RE MISSED--!

MINUTES LATER, A SENTRY WAITING IN THE CHURCH SACRISTY LOOKS UP AT THE SOUND OF RUSTLING CLOTH...
HASTEN, BROTHERS-- YOU ARE THE LAST TWO TO ARRIVE.
COME--THE CEREMONY IS ABOUT TO COMMENCE.
AND SILENTLY, THE THREE ROBED FIGURES LEAVE THE SACRISTY TO ENTER A CATHEDRAL DEFILED IN SOLEMN SACRILEGE... ITS PRIEST BOUND TO A TABLE IN FRONT OF AN ALTAR STRIPPED OF ITS CROSS...
ASSUME YOUR POSITIONS AT THE TABLE OF TWELVE, BROTHERS. YOU HAVE ALREADY KEPT US WAITING OVERLONG--
HEAR ME, PRIEST, WE ARE THE BROTHERHOOD OF JUDAS.
WE ARE GATHERED HERE TO SLAY YOU IN BLOOD.
I AM NOT AFRAID... TO MEET MY MAKER.
"--AND AN EXPLANATION WILL BE REQUIRED AT THE CONCLUSION OF TONIGHT'S CEREMONY."

WE ARE HERE TO DRINK THE BLOOD OF YOUR DEATH, PRIEST--FOR THE BLOOD IS THE LIFE.
GOD WILLING, MY BLOOD WILL ACT AS POISON TO THOSE SUCH AS YOU.
RENOUNCE THE SINS OF YOUR LIFE, PRIEST--FOR SOON YOU WILL ENTER A NEW LIFE, AND YOU MUST BE CLEAN OF PURITY.
I RENOUNCE MY SINS ONLY TO MY GOD--NOT TO YOU.
ARISE, BROTHER--AND PREPARE THE SACRAMENT.
SLOWLY, AS THOUGH GLIDING, THE DESIGNATED VAMPIRE MOVES TOWARD THE HELPLESS PRIEST... HOLDING TWELVE SILVER CHALICES ON A PLATTER BEFORE HIM...
HOW DARE YOU PROFANE THE SACRED ARTICLES OF THIS CHURCH--?!
THE CHALICES ARE PLACED BELOW THE PRIEST'S HEAD THEN, LIPS WRITHED IN A VICIOUS SNARL, FANGS WICKEDLY DISTENDED, THE VAMPIRE BENDS DOWNWARD...
AND MORBIUS SPASMS IN OUTRAGE--BEGINS TO RISE IN PROTEST...
BUT UNDER THE TABLE, MORGANA RESTRAINS HIM...
...AND HER CALM SILENCE REMINDS HIM OF THEIR AGREEMENT. TO BREACH THEIR DISGUISE WITHOUT HOPE OF SUCCESS WOULD FORFEIT MORE THAN THEIR OWN LIVES...
...AND WOULD ASSURE THE BROTHERHOOD OF JUDAS A CONTINUED CAREER OF ATROCITY...

THUS, IF THE BROTHERHOOD IS TO BE STOPPED ... MORBIUS MUST BE STOPPED... AND THE PRIEST MUST BE SACRIFICED...
YOUR BLOOD PRIEST--MY FANGS MUST FREE YOUR BLOOD...
AGH-K!
MAY HEAVEN... HAVE MERCY UPON YOU...
IN STREAMING GOUTS, THE BLOOD FLOWS DOWN FROM THE PRIEST'S BIER... AND SPATTERS INTO THE CHALICES OF SACRAMENT...
OUR FATHER..WHO ART IN HEAVEN...
HALLOWED BE THY NAME.. THY KINGDOM COME..
THY WILL BE DONE, ON EARTH...
...AS IT IS IN HEAVEN...
GRADUALLY, THE PLATTER IS ROTATED...
...AND EACH CUP IS FILLED IN TURN...
...UNTIL ALL TWELVE HAVE BEEN FILLED, THE VAMPIRE RISES, LEAVING THE PRIEST TO SPILL HIS BLOOD ONTO THE CHURCH FLOOR...
...GIVE US THIS DAY OUR DAILY BREAD...AND FORGIVE US OUR TRESPASSES...
...AS WE FORGIVE THOSE WHO TRESPASS AGAINST... UHHH?

THE SACRAMENT HAS BEEN ADMINISTERED, BUT BEFORE WE PARTAKE OF IT...
--WE MUST ENACT THE KISS--!
SILENCE... A PROLONGED, OPPRESSIVE SILENCE IN WHICH EACH OF THE TWELVE EXCHANGE GLANCES...
...OF FURTIVE QUERY.
"...FORGIVE... THEM."
THEN, FROM THE TWELVE... ONE STANDS...
MORGANA.
THIS IS WRONG. MORBIUS KNOWS--FIRST WITH BRISTLING INSTINCT...
AND THEN, AS THE WOMAN BENDS AND KISSES HIM WITH HORRIFYING CERTAINTY...!
...FOR HE FEELS MORE THAN THE PRESS OF PLIANT LIPS DURING THIS LONG KISS. HE FEELS THEN A HARD THRUST...
...OF FANGS.
HE IS REVEALED, BROTHER OF JUDAS--THE ONE WHO WOULD BETRAY US.!!
TRAPPED--ALL ALONG A TRAP... AND SO SWEETLY BAITED...

A FOOL FOR SO LONG, MORBIUS NOW CHOOSES TO REMAIN OOGILE ... TO LISTEN, AS HIS FORMER COLLEAGUE SPEAKS...
YOU HAVE CHOOSEN THE ILL-GUIDED PATH, MORBIUS ..
YOU HAVE SPURNED THE OPPORTUNITY TO JOIN US--!
THIS WE KNOW WITH COMPLETE CERTAINTY, FOR SISTER MORGANA HAS GONE TO CONSIDERABLE LENGTHS TO TEST YOUR CANDIDACY...
... AND NOW THAT YOU HAVE BEEN SHOWN UN-FIT, YOU MUST DIE.
LIKE HELL, HARKINS!!
MY BLOOD COMES AT A PREMIUM--!!
AND IF YOU REALLY THINK YOU'RE THAT THIRSTY--
--I'VE GOT SOME BETTER REFRESHMENT FOR YOU!
MORBIUS GRASPS THE BAPTISMAL FONT... WRENCHES IT FROM ITS BASE...

--AND KICKS--/
EEEEEEEE!!
LIKE NELL, I SAID--!!
LIKE HELL!!
YAHHH!
KRAK
AND NOW, HARKINS, AS PRESIDENT OF THE BOARD--
--YOU DESERVE SPECIAL TREATMENT--
AAAAAH
--BEFORE JOINING YOUR BELOVED BROTHERS--
--IN FLAME.

AND NOW, AS SHRIEKS OF AGONY SURRENDER TO CRACKLE OF FLAME, MORBIUS PAUSES. AND CONTEMPLATES WHAT HE HAS DONE. IN A SINGLE BURST OF FRENZY, THEY HAVE DIED... ALL OF THEM...
YOU HAVE MURDERED... BUT YOU HAVE NOT SINNED...
COME CLOSER, MY SON. TIME GROWS SHORT... FOR I AM DYING.
...ALL BUT ONE...
YOU ARE, DIFFERENT FROM THE OTHERS - I CAN FEEL IT.
THE CROSS WILL NOT HARM YOU.
IF YOU HAD IT, WHY DIDN'T YOU USE IT TO PROTECT YOURSELF--?
IT WOULD ONLY HAVE DELAYED THEM, MY SON... UNTIL THEY FOUND A WAY TO TAKE IT FROM ME - AND THEN I WOULD HAVE DIED ALONE...
BUT NOW... YOU MUST TAKE IT. I AM DYING AND I DO NOT WISH TO BE REBORN AS ONE OF THEM...
PLEASE, TAKE IT, BEFORE MY BLOOD LEAVES ME...
GOD WORKS IN STRANGE WAYS, MY SON.
TAKE THE CROSS
...AND DO WHAT YOU MUST--!

CHALICE AS HAMMER...
...CRUCIFIX AS STAKE...
...AND BOTH...
...IS SALVATION...
KLANG
LONG MINUTES PASS. MINUTES PUNCTUATED BY TWO SHARP SOUNDS... AND THEN ONLY SILENCE ISSUES FROM THE CATHEDRAL...
...AS MORBIUS EMERGES, HAGGARD AND DEPLETED... A FIGURE OF INEFFABLE LONELINESS, DESPONDENT AND ALMOST BEWILDERED...
A FIEND HIMSELF, HE HAS BEEN CHOSEN TO CONQUER A COVEN OF FIENDS.

AND AS HE SLOWLY STRIDES INTO THE NIGHT, A LONE SPECTER SHREDDING THE LONDON FOG HE PONDERS THE PRIEST'S WORDS.. AS THEY ECHO..
"GOD WORKS IN STRANGE WAYS, MY SON.. DO WHAT YOU MUST."
MORBIUS HAS AGREED WITH THOSE WORDS.
...AND STILL AGREES WITH THEM..
...EVEN AS HE SEES HER...
AND FEARS HER PRESENCE.
FEARS HER BLOOD AND WHAT IT MEANS TO HIM...
...LIFE...
...HER LIFE AND HIS--BOTH INNOCENT...
...BUT ONE CURSED BY THE LUST. THE THIRST. THE UNDENIABLE THIRST. THE THIRST WHICH HAS BEEN FORGOTTEN FOR SO LONG...
THE WORDS ARE STILL TRUE...
...BUT THEY ECHO MOCKINGLY NOW... AND WHISPER IN A VOICE FROM HEAVEN AND HELL...
EEEEEEEEEE
"DO WHAT YOU MUST.."
FINIS

THE WORLD'S DEADLIEST FIGHTING SECRETS CAN BE YOURS...

THE SUPREME GRAND MASTER OF THE

BLACK DRAGON FIGHTING SOCIETY

brings you the forbidden secrets of

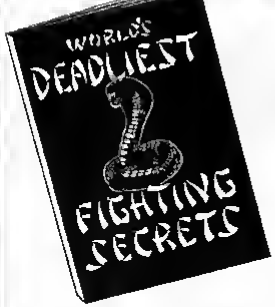
DIM MAK

"The Death Touch"

in this new improved exclusive book!

"THE DEADLIEST MAN ALIVE!"

Bringing to you these forbidden and secret fighting arts is the Supreme Grand Master of the fighting arts — Count Dente who won the World overall Fighting Arts championship (Master & Expert Divisions) after defeating the top Judo, Boxing, Wrestling, Karate, Kung Fu, Aikido, Kung Fu etc. masters in 'Death Matches' On Aug. 1, 1967 the World Federation of Fighting Arts crowned the Count — "The World's Deadliest Fighting Master."



THIS BOOK CAN SAVE YOUR LIFE

The FORBIDDEN and SECRET training manual of the BLACK DRAGON FIGHTING SOCIETY has never before been available to anyone outside of the Society. Recent attempts for regular publication and public exposure have been rejected as the contents were considered HORRIFYINGLY DANGEROUS and BRUTALLY VICIOUS.

Yes, this is the DEADLIEST and most TERRIFYING fighting art known to man — and WITHOUT EQUAL. Its MAIMING, MUTILATING, DISFIGURING, PARALYZING and CRIPPLING techniques are known by only a few people in the world. This is the only book ever written on DIM MAK. An expert at DIM MAK (the most advanced form of Kung Fu) could easily kill many Judo, Karate, Kung Fu, Aikido and Gung Fu experts at one time with only finger tip pressure using his murderous POISON HAND WEAPONS. Instructing you step by step thru each move in this manual is none other than COUNT DANTE — "THE DEADLIEST MAN WHO EVER LIVED" (THE CROWN PRINCE OF DEATH)

BLACK DRAGON FIGHTING SOCIETY

The BLACK DRAGON FIGHTING SOCIETY is the WORLD'S DEADLIEST FIGHTING ORGANIZATION which has included in its closed membership the top fighting experts of the DREADED CHINESE TONG SOCIETY — the oriental and more vicious counterpart of the Mafia. Its members, who are the world's top Masters in the oriental fistic and grappling arts train in the most SECRET and FORBIDDEN aspects of the DEADLY Chinese fighting arts of GUNG FU, TAI CHI CHUAN, CHUAN FA, KEMPO, HSING YI, PA KUA, SHAOLIN BOXING, KUNG FU and DIM MAK.

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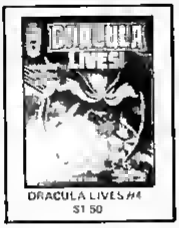
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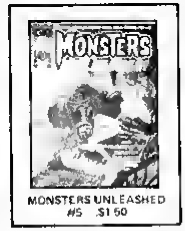

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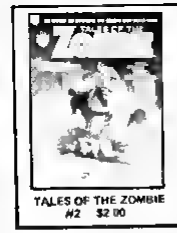
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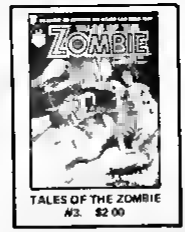

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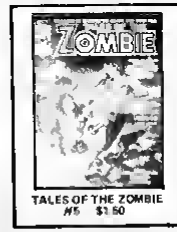

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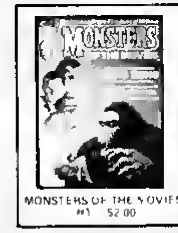

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Story JOHN WARNER Art YONG MONTANO

THE SLEEPING HOBO STARTS AWAKE, FEELING, LIKE A SIXTH SENSE, ANOTHER PRESENCE! IT IS FEELING THAT CONJURES TOO MANY MEMORIES OF PAIN AND TOO FEW OF COMFORT.
BACK, RUBE! THIS FOUR-WALLED COW PASTURE'S JUS' FINE WI' ME. I'M NOT ABOUT TO LETCH MOVE ME QUIET.
I-AM-LAMONT!
IT IS AS IF THE WIND ITSELF SPEAKS, YET THERE IS TRANQUILITY IN THE TONES!
SAY YOU AIN'T NO BOUNCER-- NO COMMON 'BO, NEITHER!
C'MON! I LIKE YOUR DUDS! ANYWAY, IT'S GOOD TO HAVE SOMEONE TO SPILL WINE WITH!
"THE NAME'S SLIM-- O.KIE SLIM! HOW LONG Y'BEEN ON THE ROAD?"
"NOT MUCH A TALKER, EH? WELL I'LL TALK A STREAK FOR DAYS IF YOU LET ME. I GOT STORIES... RUNNIN' FROM THE LAW ACROSS TWO STATES! I WAS JUS' A PUP -- SO LONG AGO, DON' RIGHTLY 'MEMBER WHAT I DID."
"ENDED UP RIDIN' TRAINS AND DIGGIN' CROPS, FOLLOWIN' THE HARVEST LIKE A FOOL CHASIN' THE SUN!
NEVER DID FIND IT-- THE SUN NOR NOTHIN' ELSE FOR THAT MATTER! I'M JUS' LORD-A-MIGHTY WEARY!
WISH I COULD DIE BUT I'M TOO WEARY EVEN FOR THAT.
...MEBBE A LITTLE SCAIRT TOO, I'LL ADMIT...
EH?
YAAAAHHH
HHRRROOOO

WHOOOOOOO..
RHOOOO..
THE TRAIN WHISTLES HOLLOWLY, POUNDING THUNDER RECEDING TO ARTHMIC CLACKING, FADING INTO THE TENEBROUS NIGHTSCAPE.
AND LAMONT, CLUTCHING NOW LIFELESS FORM OF CAKIE SLIM, LIKEWISE FADES INTO THE DARKNESS..
REAPPEARING AT A DESOLATE DUMP SITE, ISOLATED IN A PROTECTIVE NEST OF OAK FOREST!
DISTANCES ARE REL..TIVE. ..WERE TEN MILES FROM THE SECLUDED DUMP SHACK IS A SMALL BUT THRIVING TOWN. IT IS MUCH LIKE ANY OTHER SMALL TOWN IN THESE 1930'S, TH' FOREMENTIONED THRIVING SLOWED BY NATIONAL DEPRESSION!
YET TONIGHT, ITS STREETS SEEM JUST A LITTLE NARROWER ...ITS ALLEYS JUST A LITTLE DARKER..
..THAN ANY ORDINARY SMALL TOWN!
WITNESS OFFICERS WENDELL KNAPP AND EARL NORTON..
THIS IS CRAZY! PATROLLING IN PAIRS WITH A THIRD CHECK MAN--ALL FOR ONE LOONEY WHO NAILS WOODEN STAKES INTO PEOPLE'S HEARTS!
I DUNNO! THEY SAY IT'S MORE THAN ONE AN' THAT THEY'RE ALL NOBOES. THOSE WHO'VE BEEN SEEN! I EVEN HEARD THEY SUCK THE BLOOD...
SURE THEY DO.
..AN' THEIR LEADER IS A TALL CHINEE-MAN WITH A BROW LIKE SHAKESPEARE, GREEN EYES AND A FACE LIKE THE DEVIL! C'MON, I.. EH?
WENDEEELLL!

AT HIS CHECKPOINT TWO BLOCKS AWAY, OFFICER JOHN TRENT HEARS THE BLOODY TERROR OF WENDELL'S REPLY...
...HEARS AND REACTS!
AAAAHH
WENDELL! EARL!
LORDY!
YOU 'BOES JUST FREEZE MAYBE, JUST MAYBE, I CAN REMEMBER I'M AN OFFICER AND NOT A VIGILANTE / BUT DAMN! IF YOU EVEN BREATHE TOO HARD...
BUT THESE "BOES" DON'T FREEZE! THEY MOVE TOWARDS THE SHAKEN OFFICER...
I--I WARNED YOU...
BA-KOW BA-KOW
POW
YOU-YOU DON'T STOP.. YOU CAN'T STILL BE STANDING! YOU-YOU CAN'T--!
NOOOOOOOO! STAY AWAY!
JOHN TRENT BOLTS, BUT HIS LEGS FEEL LIKE RUBBER, HIS HEAD THROBS...
FROM BEHIND COME SOUNDS, PAWS ON PAVEMENT, THE LOW GUTTERAL SNARLS OF STALKING WOLVES!
WOLVES THAT MAY HAVE, MOMENTS BEFORE, BEEN MEN... BUT MOST CERTAINLY WERE NOT HUMAN!
LORD, WHATEVER'S ON THE OTHER SIDE OF THIS WALL...
BETTER BE SOFT!

PROVIDENCE! THAT'S JOHN TRENT'S LABEL— YOU PICK YOUR OWN!
PROVIDENCE SOFT GRASS TO CUSHION A LONG, AWKWARD FALL INTO A CHURCHYARD.
A CHURCH— THE PERFECT FORTRESS AGAINST AN ATTACK OF (WHETHER JOHN KNOWS THEY ARE OR NOT) VAMPIRES!
DOORS THICK... SAFE!
JOHN TRENT HASN'T SEEN THE INSIDE OF A CHURCH ON MANY SUNDAYS, BUT HE HAS FAITH... AND RESPECT FOR THE GOD WHOSE NAME HE OCCASIONS TO TAKE IN VAIN!
AFTER TONIGHT, HE MAY RECONSIDER... PERHAPS BOTH HIS SUNDAYS AND HIS LANGUAGE!
SUDDENLY...
TAK!
EH?
NO...!
WAIT!
NO! NOT OUT THERE! COME BACK! COME BACK! PLEASE, COME BACK.
BLAG!
YAAAAAH!
...COME BACK...
...COME BACK.
...COME BACK...
...COME BACK...
...OH, HELP ME!

DAWN BREAKS! THE LIGHT OF DAY PASSES QUICKLY AND A NEW NIGHT DONS ITS PULIGINOUS CLOAKS!
CONCIOUSNESS COMES SLOWLY TO OAKIE SLIM, COMPREHENSION COMES EVEN SLOWER! HE HAS ALMOST FORGOTTEN HE DIED THE NIGHT BEFORE, ALMOST FORGOTTEN!
REALITY IN HIS OWN CONTEXT, SWEEPS IN ON HIM--THE WEIGHT AND SUBSTANCE OF FANGS IN HIS MOUTH..
...AND AN ALL-CONSUMING HUNGER!
NOOOOOOOO!
YOU WILL BE CALM FRIEND--YOU WILL TRUST ME BECAUSE YOU ARE FORCED TO.
...JUST AS THEY ALL TRUST ME!
WE ARE HOBOES AND, AS IN LIFE MUST BAND TOGETHER IN LIVING DEATH!
UNITY IS OUR ONLY PROTECTION AS HOBOES--OR VAMPIRES! ONLY OTHER HOBOES JOIN US... OTHERS, THEIR BLOOD TAKEN, THEN FIND A STAKE FOR THEIR HEARTS!
YOU ARE ONE OF US--COLLECTIVELY, WE OWN YOU!
NO, YOU GOT IT WRONG...
SMEK-KESH!
WHA--AAARRGHH!
THIS 'BO DON'T HAVE MUCH, BUT OAKIE SLIM DON'T OWE HIS SOUL.. NOT TO MAN NOR DEVIL!
LAMONT TAKES PRECIOUS SECONDS TO RECOVER HIMSELF, THE GROTESQUE ASSEMBLY STANDS INACTIVE, AS IF MOCKING HIM FLAGRANTLY!
IN TRUTH, LAMONT OWNS THEM FAR MORE THAN ONE MIGHT SUSPECT. THEY--BROKEN, LOST REFUSE OF A SOCIETY IN METAMORPHOSIS-HAVE SURRENDERED THEIR ALL. THEY ARE LITTLE BETTER THAN AUTOMATONS AWAITING DIRECTIVES...
GO! BLAST YOU.. AFTER HIM, KILL HIM!

BATS! ALL A' THEM, THEY'RE BATS! OH, LORDY! VAMPIRES!
YEAH, SO AM I, AN' THAT MEANS I CAN BECOME A BAT TOO... AND FLY FASTER 'CUZ IT'S MY SOUL I'M CHASIN'!
SLIM FIGHTS, WAVERS, NEARLY FALLS, CONCENTRATES, FEELS HIMSELF AFLAME WITH THE NEWNESS OF TRANSFORMATION!
BUT THEN, ALAS IT IS TOO LATE!
CONTRARY TO POPULAR OPINION, WINGS TAKE A LOT OF ADJUSTING TO!
NOOOOOOO...!
NOT LIKE THIS...
"NOT SCAIRED, NOT IN SOME DARK DUMP CANYON...
WHOOOOOOOOO
RHOOOOOOOOO
A TRAIN, YES, A WONDERFUL MOVING TRAIN, CARRYING ME ALONG TO ALL THEM PLACES I BEEN THRU ONE LAST HAIL AND FAREWELL!
BUT NOT LIKE... HUH?
FREEZE... PUT THOSE STAKES DOWN AND LINE UP SLOW AND EASY, WE'RE PUTTIN' AN END TO THESE KILLINGS RIGHT NOW!
HSSSSST! YOU HAVE IT WRONG... IT IS YOU WHO WILL FIND DEATH THIS NIGHT!

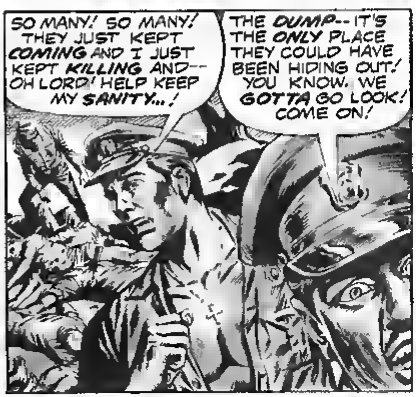
YAAAUUUGHH!!
CURSED CROSSES!
THE POLICE HADN'T REALLY BELIEVED JOHN WHEN THEY FOUND HIM IN THAT CHURCH, BABBLING ABOUT HOBO VAMPIRES! BUT HE MANAGED TO CONVINCE THEM TO SEARCH THE HILLS THIS NIGHT FOR HOBOES!
AND, WHILE EVERYONE HAD AGREED IT WAS SILLY, JOHN EVEN CONVINCED THEM TO CARRY WOODEN STAKES...
... AND TO WEAR SILVER CROSSES!

THIS IS SLIM'S CHANCE... TO SLIP AWAY! TO BE FREE AGAIN...
BUT NO, THERE IS ONE TASK LEFT.. UNDONE

CHUK! AREEEEIIIII!
CHUK! YAARRGG
THESE MEN DO NOT RELISH WHAT THEY DO! THEIR VICTIMS STILL LOOK SOMEWHAT HUMAN -- AND THERE IS NO GRATIFICATION IN VIGILANTEISM!
THERE IS NO MORALITY IN HORROR!

WHROOOO!

-OOOWKO


SO MANY! SO MANY! THEY JUST KEPT COMING AND I JUST KEPT KILLING AND-- OH LORD! HELP KEEP MY SANITY...!
THE DUMP-- IT'S THE ONLY PLACE THEY COULD HAVE BEEN HIDING OUT! YOU KNOW. WE GOTTA GO LOOK! COME ON!

EPILOGUE...
THE SEARCH OF THE OLD DUMP PROVES ANTI-CLIMATIC! TWENTY FIVE EMPTY ORANGE CRATE COFFINS...
...AND ONE LAST CASUALTY!
WHOOOSH... RHOOOOM...
I--I THINK IT'S FINALLY, REALLY OVER!
THAT FIRE SURE FEELS FINE... FUNNY, HOW COLD IT IS TONIGHT! MIDDLE OF SUMMER TOO!
SLIM WATCHES IN AWE AS THE STARS ARC OVERHEAD THEN FADE THE SKY BLUSHING PINK!
SUN SPLASHES OVER HIM, BUT HE DOESN'T SCREAM! HE DOESN'T EVEN WINCE!
HE SMILES!
FINIS

NEXT ISSUE

Dare we reveal—*what lies ahead?*

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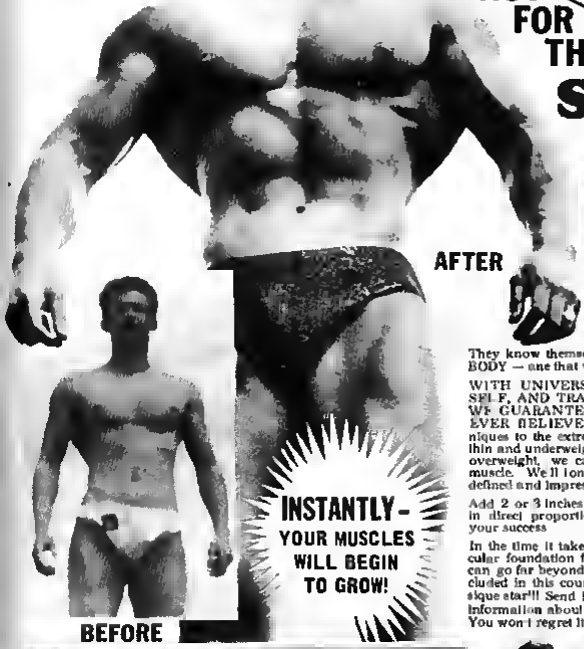

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